



## 8. FLORIDA STATE

Seminoles football has become as predictable and monotonous as the tomahawk chop. For nine consecutive years coach Bobby Bowden's teams have won at least 10 games and been ranked no lower than No. 4 in the final polls—both NCAA Division I-A records. In fact, Florida State fans are so accustomed to winning that when the Seminoles were upset by Virginia 33–28 last November, their first ACC loss since joining the league in 1991, all Tallahassee went into a frenzy of hand-wringing. What was wrong? Was Bowden slipping? "If we lose one game, we disappoint a lot of people," says junior quarterback Thad Busby. "That's not right, but we've put ourselves in that situation by having such great seasons and records."

Well, Seminoles fans, prepare yourselves for another great season and record. About the only real area of concern for Bowden is the offensive line, which lost three starters. But senior Todd Fordham, a 6'5", 300-pound tackle, and senior Chad Bates, a 6'3', 285-pound guard, should provide stability and leadership until the newcomers come around.

If the line jells, the Seminoles' offense, which led Division I-A last season with an average of 574.5 yards per game, will be its usual overpowering self. The running attack will showcess conior tailback Warrick Dunn, the 5'0', 185-pound stasher who averaged 7.5 yards per carry last fall (second in Division I-A) and became the first Seminoles runner to rush two seasons for at least 1,000 yards.

At quarterback Busby will be the fourth consecutive Florida State starter who didn't take over the job until his junior year (the others were Casey Weldon, Charlie Ward and Danny Kanell). When the 6'3', 215-pounder filled in for Kanell last season, he played well, completing 11 of 13 passes against Maryland and throwing for 156

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yards against N.C. State. His primary receivers will be wideouts Andre Cooper, a senior, and E.G. Green, a With back-to-back 1,000yard seasons, Dunn has the cut of a Helsman candidate.

junior. Last year they became the first pair of Seminoles to surpass 1,000 receiving yards in the same season. Cooper also broke the school record for touchdown catches in a season.

Florida State's offense has been so potent over the years that the defense sometimes doesn't get the credit it deserves. For example, last season the Seminoles forced 34 turnovers. The line will be anchored by junior noseguard Andre Wadsworth, a former walk-on who led the team with 77 tackles in '95. The defensive ends are senior Reinard Wilson, who has 22 career sacks, just four short of the school record, and junior Peter Boulware, who led the ACC in sacks last fall with 10. The best linebacker is Daryl Bush, who was the only sophomore semifinalist for the Butkus Award last year. All four starters from the secondary return—Byron Capers, Sean Hamlet, Robert Hammond and Samari Rolle—and there are strong backups at every position.

Another 10-win season looks very possible, but the Seminoles are shooting even higher. Says Busby, "The only thing we haven't done since I've been here is have an undefeated season." Now that might impress people in Tallahassee. —WILLIAM F. REED

## 9. usc

Quarterback Brad Otton estimates that during a two-year stint in the early '90s as a Mormon missionary in Italy, he converted one individual. With a sheepish grin he then corrects himself. "Well, that's what I sometimes tell people," he says. "Actually I don't know that I ever converted anyone."

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